

**COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION/INFORMATION SYSTEMS
IN JOINT SESSION WITH
COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES**

December 3, 2002

5:15 PM

Chairman Gatsas called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Gatsas, Guinta, Osborne, Forest, O'Neil, Lopez, Sysyn,
Pinard, Shea, DeVries (late)

TABLED ITEM

Review and discussion relative to the proposed reorganization of the Board
of Assessors.

On motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Guinta, it was voted
to remove this item from the table.

Chairman Gatsas asked what is the pleasure of this joint Committee. Do we want
to hear presentations?

Alderman Lopez stated as far as the Human Resources Committee is concerned
we voted on this particular matter and at this particular time I think it boils down
to a basic decision. If you want to hear from Steve Tellier who provided us with
more information, that is fine with me. We can have a dialogue. I think the basic
thing is do we continue operating the Assessor's Office the way it is and has been
in the past or do we change it? Under the rules of the Charter, nine of us have to
change the department structure and if we can't come to that conclusion then the
end results remains that the Assessor's Office remains the same. I think in the
interest of the City, my position and the HR Director's position are to reorganize
the Assessor's Office. The other members can speak for themselves but we can't
continue paying \$250,000 for three Assessors in my viewpoint. The Mayor has
made a presentation and, therefore, I think the reorganization is needed on the
basis of a part-time Board and that it has to be filtered in. They need some help. I
worked with the HR Director and the Mayor in filling a Customer Service
position, which Steve is in the process of interviewing for. Also, they need to hire
an Appraiser so that they can continue working in the best interest of the City.

Chairman Gatsas stated so basically what we are talking about is in this packet
there is Proposal A, the Assessor's Reorganization as proposed by the Mayor.

One of the proposals is for seven positions and one is for eight. Is that correct, Ms. Lamberton?

Ms. Lamberton replied the first proposal has seven positions.

Chairman Gatsas responded I am looking at the proposals so that we are all on the same page and we are all talking about the same thing. There is Proposal A and Proposal B.

Alderman Lopez asked are you looking at the amendment, Mr. Chairman, that came in later.

Chairman Gatsas answered I am looking at the one that was attached to the agenda. The first proposal is Proposal A and the top number is \$377,786. The second one with eight positions and the three Board of Assessor members is \$358,287. Proposal B, which was presented by the Mayor has a proposed Assessor structure with nine positions and a Director of the Assessor's Office and Board of Assessors with three members. Those are basically the two proposals that the Mayor has brought forward. Is that correct?

Ms. Lamberton replied correct. The Mayor has proposed to increase the Assessor's Office by one position, which would make it eight or the alternative is to increase the office by two positions and have nine employees.

Chairman Gatsas stated but the second proposal includes three non-paid members. Is that correct?

Ms. Lamberton replied all of the Mayor's proposals have three non-paid people as a Board of Assessors.

Chairman Gatsas stated so that we can line these up and have the right things in the right places, in this packet I assume there is a proposal by the Assessor's Office. Is there or is there not?

Ms. Lamberton replied yes.

Chairman Gatsas asked and that is where. It is not in this packet? It was sent under separate cover?

Ms. Lamberton replied yes I believe so.

Chairman Gatsas stated Steve let me ask you...Proposal 1 is a comparison based on the Mayor's Proposal A so we are lining these up in the same spot.

Mr. Tellier stated I do have extra copies for those who may not have them.

Chairman Gatsas stated my question is, does your Proposal 1 line up side by side with the Mayor's Proposal A.

Mr. Tellier replied yes, Sir.

Chairman Gatsas asked and Proposal 2 lines up side by side with the Mayor's Proposal B.

Mr. Tellier answered that is correct.

Chairman Gatsas stated so what I am looking at is the two top sections, the Proposal 1 and Proposal A and the number of \$377,786 is the same.

Mr. Tellier stated what we have here is two packets – the Mayor's as proposed in a letter format, Proposal A and Proposal B. One proposal as stated by Chairman Gatsas with eight positions and another one with nine positions. In the packet that is being distributed that went out via courier as well, the Board of Assessors has labeled theirs Proposal 1 and Proposal 2. One for eight positions and one for nine positions so that they are comparing apples to apples. If you open up the Mayor's Proposal A and put it side by side with the Assessor's Proposal 1 you will see at the top on both proposals the current structure and the current salaries. They don't deviate. They are exactly the same. Underneath is the Mayor's proposal for a part-time Board and the subsequent salary line item. On the Board of Assessor's recommendation is eight positions with a full time Board. With the vacant Assessor's position, as you will note with an asterisk there are three positions. Those are entered as a half-year. There is an addendum at the bottom that denotes that they are half-year salaries. That is also done on the Mayor's side with the exception and I am sorry if this is confusing but on the bottom of the Mayor's proposal, the Customer Service Rep position was listed as a full year. If you just cut that in half and to compare apples to apples because that position is being filled but it is a half year so if you wanted to compare these exactly the same that should be entered...instead of \$26,073 if you were to pencil in \$13,036 that would reduce the Mayor's number of \$358,287 to a reconciled number of \$345,250.

Alderman Lopez asked which sheet are you working on.

Mr. Tellier answered I am looking at the Mayor's Proposal A, the very bottom number. The \$26,073. That is a position that is just being filled. Similar to the other two here, the Appraiser-Residential and the Appraiser-Commercial, those are entered in as a half-year. If we are going to compare apples to apples, these have been entered as a half-year.

Chairman Gatsas asked Ms. Lamberton do you agree with those figures.

Ms. Lamberton answered yes.

Chairman Gatsas stated so the difference between the Mayor's proposal and the Assessor's proposal is a \$9,000 savings on the Mayor's side.

Ms. Lamberton replied yes.

Chairman Gatsas stated let's go to Proposal 2 and then we can at least get everybody on the same page here. Do we need to do that same \$13,000 adjustment here?

Mr. Tellier replied yes that is correct. The bottom line if you reduce the \$26,073 to \$13,036 instead of \$372,236 will now be reconciled to \$359,199.

Chairman Gatsas asked do you agree with that Ms. Lamberton.

Ms. Lamberton answered yes I do.

Chairman Gatsas stated so the difference on that one is the same - \$9,000 I assume. So the only difference between the two proposal is \$9,000 in additional costs on your side versus the Mayors along with three Board of Assessors that are quasi not paid and independent.

Mr. Tellier replied correct.

Chairman Gatsas stated and those would be appointments by the Mayor.

Mr. Tellier replied under his proposal they would be appointed by the Mayor...under the Charter my understanding is they are nominated. If you look under Boards and Commissions they are nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by the Board of Aldermen.

Alderman Lopez stated that is incorrect. They are nominated by the Aldermen and approved by the Aldermen because they are officers of the City.

Chairman Gatsas replied I think we are talking about the three...

Alderman Lopez interjected oh the part-time Board. Yes.

Alderman Shea stated I think that we have two questions before us. The first question is do we want to have a Board of Assessors with three members who are people who are selected by the Mayor in order to conduct abatements and appeals. Originally I had mixed feelings and I did sort of go along with the Mayor's recommendation but in recent weeks I have had people call me and these people have called me and I have referred them to the two members of the Board of

Assessors present tonight and the results have been positive. I have never had a complaint. I have checked with these people. They have been satisfied with the role that the two gentlemen played in this process. Today I happened to go into the Assessor's Office and I saw an elderly person come in and that elderly person was being handled by one of the Assessors. His concerns were being addressed. If we had another type of Board he would have to wait until this Board met, whether it be a week or two weeks or a month. When he came out I asked him how did you do. He said my problem was solved. These gentlemen were excellent. So, I think that there is and I am throwing this out for consideration, I think that when I as an Alderman call Tom Lolicata I get decent service, I get immediate service. Same with Frank Thomas. If we are going to have a Board who will meet periodically to discuss abatements, appeals and so forth I am thinking how long will it take and what will happen when these people don't have the insights or the experience of the gentlemen that have been serving. I think as we discuss this issue I think we should take the two issues separately. Should we vote for a Board of Assessors, three members who would be selected by the Mayor to make judgements concerning appeals and abatements or should we not. At a future time, possibly when we have all of the figures in, should we then decide whether we want to have a type of Assessor's Board that will have seven members, eight members, nine members, ten members or eleven members. I think those are two separate issues and I think that is what we should do. Thank you.

Alderman Pinard moved to leave the Board of Assessor's as is. I have had the same opportunity as Alderman Shea. Every time I called the Assessors, my constituents get 100% response. If we go to a part-time Board it will take a long time for people to get answers. I think we should leave these people alone. Let Steve work with the HR Director to come up with a better plan if there is one to be done.

Chairman Gatsas responded I am not going to accept your motion because I think there is still some discussion on the floor but I will come back to you as soon as we are looking for a motion.

Alderman Lopez stated I would just like to answer Alderman Shea. I don't believe that whether you have appraisers, assessors or personnel people down there that the people coming in with a problem are not going to be served. I would believe that Steve Tellier if he had whatever system, the public would still be served. Would you agree with that, Steve?

Mr. Tellier replied I will agree that the public would be served, Alderman, however, we wouldn't have the authority to give them an answer at that time because at that point...should you decide to support a part-time Board the authority to grant abatements, exemptions, Veteran's credit, lies with that Board. We could make recommendations and we could offer to the taxpayer that this would be our recommendation to the Board but they are under no obligation to

accept or grant...it is up to them to grant or deny. Now they would meet as often as necessary or they would create their own policies and procedures but to that effect, Alderman, we would no longer have the authority to give them that decision right away.

Alderman Lopez responded I agree with you wholeheartedly. You have to justify to the part-time Board your actions and your accountability to Assessor's Office. I think the public still would be served and also when you say that you...for example and I will use this only in the form of an example, the people have to wait now, all of those people who put in for an abatement still have to wait until you make an appointment with them and sit down with them and discuss their issues. At the last count you had about 600 people. There is no more time delay in my viewpoint of someone waiting a week or two weeks or three weeks to get a hearing from you and if you are in their favor that is what you are going to do. You are going to go before this Board and issue your statement to the Board that either the person gets an abatement or what. In your correspondence you already indicated that you will be taking minutes and it will be open and all of that stuff so I just don't understand what the major issue here is other than I don't want to leave the impression that the people aren't going to be served. If somebody has a problem, they are going to call you as the department head and say here is the problem and you are going to take care of it. If you have three or four appraisers, they are going to take care of the problem. I just don't understand why we are saying that people are not going to be taken care of. It just doesn't make sense.

Alderman Forest stated I know some of the comments and I sort of agree with Alderman Shea on some of them. The thing that I am sort of afraid of is this part-time Board of Assessors. Granted what we have now and some of the boards are okay but I have seen disasters in Boards of Commissioners and volunteer boards in the past. I really don't want to bring politics into this Board and I think...getting three members who are volunteers appointed by a certain individual or the Mayor makes it more political. As far as Alderman Lopez's comments about Steve having 600 people waiting for abatements, this was unusual because we went 10 years without an assessment. I think with a full-time Board of Assessors and the way the system runs now if they get the help they need and I know I see a proposal here for nine, which gives them a couple of more people to do the job, this job is going to be done on a daily basis. It is not going to be done just once very 10 years or once a week. I recommend that we don't go with a part-time Board of Assessors.

Alderman Thibault stated I happened to be in the Assessor's Office this morning when I came in from Ohio and I stopped in there and one thing that struck me is that some gentleman came in with a problem and the Assessor's were able to take care of it right there. This man is no longer on the books. His problem was settled. They told him exactly what had to happen and it happened. I would have to agree with Alderman Shea that the full-time Board have the powers that if we

go to a part-time Board will no longer have those powers. It will be run similar to a zoning board so when somebody comes in and has a problem it is going to have to go to a separate meeting to be decided and then come back as to what is going to happen. To me that doesn't make any sense and when you look at the difference in price in what it is going to cost to keep a full-time Board, I think it is just stupid. I am certainly for keeping the three full-time Assessors.

Alderman O'Neil stated I would like to shift gears a little bit, Mr. Chairman, away from the debate of the full and part-time Board and more to where this whole thing started and that is whether or not there is an opportunity to save money on the top. I believe that is where the Mayor focused his discussion. I guess I would ask this question of Steve, Tom Arnold and Ginny Lamberton. Can the position of appraiser also be called an assessor?

Ms. Lamberton replied I would think not. I would think you are either an appraiser or an assessor.

Mr. Tellier stated an assessor is, in fact, an appraiser but an appraiser is not an assessor.

Alderman O'Neil asked, Tom, do you agree with that.

Deputy Solicitor Arnold answered to a certain extent yes. I would note that some of the duties of an assessor as opposed to an appraiser are provided for by statute so I hesitate to intermingle the two so that everyone thinks they are referring to one in the same.

Alderman O'Neil stated I go back to the basic question. Do we want to have three Assessors at the salary of an Assessor or do we want a Director with more Appraisers? That is where I think we need to be focusing to begin with before we start worrying about a full or part-time Board.

Chairman Gatsas replied I agree with you, Alderman O'Neil. There is only one problem. I don't think you are going to find a Commercial Appraiser for \$44,000. We can look at this number, this reorganization chart that the Mayor has brought forward but I think that if we look at what commercial appraisers are getting paid out there it is a far cry from \$44,000. I don't think that this is...Ms. Lamberton did you get these numbers for the Mayor? How did he develop appraiser-residential and appraiser-commercial? Where did those come from?

Ms. Lamberton responded we analyzed the positions with our point factor system, etc. and came up with a salary grade. The actual number that is in the proposal was a result of some of my discussions with Steve about the fact that we probably could not hire somebody at the minimum of the salary grade so we bumped it up a couple of steps.

Chairman Gatsas asked did you check with any of the surrounding communities that have commercial and residential appraisers like Nashua.

Ms. Lamberton answered yes I have.

Chairman Gatsas asked and what is Nashua paying for commercial appraisers.

Ms. Lamberton replied I don't remember off the top of my head. We were not...my memory says there were places that paid a little bit less and there were places that paid a little bit more.

Chairman Gatsas stated well a little bit more is not much more than the \$9,000 that if they are paying...consolidation as far as my opinion goes is that there should be some significant savings and for us to just arbitrarily put two figures on a piece of paper and say that with this consolidation method we are going to save money, however, when we find in six months that we can't hire anybody for that and we have to go and get a commercial appraiser for \$60,000 we haven't saved anything. Some of the problem that I have is obviously my understanding is that whenever the abatements come through they are referred to the Committee on Accounts. My belief is that it should be an agenda item for the full Board and we should see those so there is no...I don't know if the Committee on Accounts...Alderman Shea I know you are the Chairman. Do you actually look and see who gets an abatement? They say that they report them to Accounts. I don't know if they come through as one bunch...

Alderman Shea interjected they come through as one bunch. I can't tell you specifically who gets abatements or not. I can tell you in my own ward who calls me.

Chairman Gatsas replied right but there is nothing that anybody in that Committee ever looks at and says how did somebody get an abatement of \$7 million on a building that was assessed at \$14 million. I don't know if that ever happens. I don't know if there is any scrutiny where you ask the Assessor's why did they do that.

Alderman Shea responded they do report to the Accounts Committee and are questioned carefully about certain matters. I think that Alderman Lopez and Alderman Guinta did question them concerning the abatements and the number of abatements and what was going on as far as that was concerned. I do agree that all of the Aldermen should receive the data concerning abatements and it should be a separate item so that it is not coupled with any other kind of financial report that may be given from the Finance Department.

Chairman Gatsas asked is there a problem with presenting those as an agenda item to the full Board.

Mr. Tellier answered absolutely not. That is on the list on our recommendations actually. After conferring with you and recognizing that even though it is reported quarterly that we could certainly implement additional controls so that it is brought up as a separate item and brought under more scrutiny. If you look on the cover sheet that is one of the items that we have recommended to be changed. Right now it is brought through the Committee process and what we are recommending is that it be submitted to the entire Board under separate cover perhaps as an addendum to what you were alluding to a sub-set of those that have been expedited, what was the original value, what is the new value, the abated amount and submitted in that format.

Alderman Lopez stated I believe you are already doing that for the Committee though.

Mr. Tellier replied yes we are doing that.

Alderman Lopez stated just for the sake of argument, this is what it looks like. As Alderman Shea alluded to, we question a few of those and you can go down and visit the Assessors the next day and you get the packet of information on why they gave the abatement.

Chairman Gatsas replied right but those are done on a quarterly basis. If they do them...

Alderman Lopez interjected they are supposed to be done on a quarterly basis but it has been requested by the Committee that they be done and reported more frequently and with new guidelines. Mr. Tellier is supposed to work that out with Alderman Shea. Is that correct?

Mr. Tellier replied that is correct.

Alderman O'Neil stated again I go back to the basic discussion. Do we want to maintain three Assessors along with an additional residential appraiser or do we want a Director with three appraisers? There is a price difference of approximately \$60,000.

Chairman Gatsas replied \$9,000.

Alderman Lopez stated you mentioned a savings of \$9,000 but I think the whole idea here is to get enough appraisers on board in a period of time because if we don't and we go to the seven or eight people...I think the savings is going to be the \$700,000 that the Assessors are anticipating requesting. If he gets these other

people I don't believe it would be \$700,000, therefore, there would be a reduction for next year's budget.

Chairman Gatsas replied you are making it sound like the Assessors sit back in lazy chairs and don't do any appraising. They are doing appraising now.

Alderman Lopez responded personally I am looking at the regulation that is coming down in 2004, which you are well aware of. They are going to have a checklist and they are going to have to have people to do those checklists and if they don't have enough appraisers...having three Assessors is not going to accomplish it.

Chairman Gatsas stated but an assessor to an appraiser is the same body. It doesn't constitute an assessor not doing the appraisers work. It is just a different title.

Alderman Lopez responded I agree with you on that.

Chairman Gatsas stated so whether it is nine appraisers under the Mayor's proposal or nine appraisers under the Assessor's proposal, those people have to do the work. It is just a different title we are giving them. One is an officer of the City and the other is not.

Alderman Lopez replied that is correct.

Alderman DeVries stated I guess a question to Steve Tellier then would be is nine positions a figure that you would guarantee would cover the forthcoming regulations with the proposed property tax.

Mr. Tellier replied no. If you look on the cover page towards the bottom under Board of Assessor's Recommendation, the second bullet says "the total staffing of 11 FTE's or combination of outsourcing and staffing as determined by BMA." Our original...when this first started we came in with a recommended FTE staff of 11 and an appropriate budget to support that staff to do revaluations in a cycle of every other year. The Mayor came in with a proposal for eight people. We were comparing apples to oranges so for purposes of this Committee and to assist the Aldermen we sat down with Finance and Ms. Lamberton so that we could compare apples to apples. What you have before you under Proposal 1 for the Assessors and Proposal A for the Mayor is comparing apples to apples. We can't do a revaluation with nine people. The Board of Assessors has had a staff of approximately six people since 1906. They converted a part-time half a position to a full-time position, I believe, in 1995. I dare say since 1906 we have certainly changed in complexity and value and scope of task here.

Chairman Gatsas asked so your answer to the Alderman is no you cannot do the reassessment that is going to be required in two years.

Mr. Tellier answered correct.

Alderman DeVries asked it would require two additional appraisers positions plus the three Assessors as requested.

Mr. Tellier answered it would require a staff of approximately 11. Now if we have an appraisal staff...the three members of the Board who are appraisers and some additional appraisers we can do a lot of that work. What I am not prepared to answer now is...we don't know whether you are looking at eight employees or nine employees or ten or eleven. We have two bids – one for \$700,000, which does not include defensive values. We have another bid for \$815,000 to do the citywide update. With a staff of seven we can oversee this and maintain our day-to-day operations. Now if you add two more appraisers, who are out in the field, we can deduct from that \$700,000 an appropriate amount but at this point I don't know what these Committees are looking for.

Chairman Gatsas asked can you just tell us what you think the deduction would be. Obviously that is pertinent to what we are looking at.

Mr. Tellier answered I don't have that amount. I am going to speak with the revaluation firms. I have to break it up into residential and non-residential and how much that value is. It depends on whether we hire commercial appraisers or residential appraisers.

Alderman DeVries stated I certainly agree with you that the question of a full-time versus part-time Board is separate from the financial situation that we are placed in trying to meet the regulations that the State has us under for future needs but it certainly is pertinent to our decision tonight when we go forward looking at the individual salaries here. If you agree that a commercial and/or residential appraiser can be brought into the organization at the \$40,000 to \$45,000 level it just seems pertinent that somehow we look at working that into the fold for the future. Whether we call them Assessors/Appraisers which you believe we can do and I believe the City Solicitor said we may or may not be able to do it without a Charter change but that seems to be the real question. Do we go forward with future positions based at a lower level of salary and still roll them into the Assessor's Board.

Mr. Tellier replied to answer your question, I believe, the issue of compensation for a Board of Assessor's member is at the purview of this Board in working with HR or the Committee or what have you. That is under your purview. However, the issue of whether to have a full-time Board of Assessors or a part-time Board

that is not compensated because it is my understanding that we don't compensate any of our commissions at this point, that is going to be a decision of this Board.

Alderman O'Neil stated Steve I know when this was originally presented it was way out here but when I look at this now if we take away your proposal and the Mayor's proposal with the nine positions, we take away the Engineering Technician, the Assistant to the Assessor and the two Customer Service Reps because those are the same in both proposals, correct...

Mr. Tellier interjected correct.

Alderman O'Neil stated there are still five positions. The difference is what their titles are and what they are paid. Is that correct?

Mr. Tellier replied I believe so.

Alderman O'Neil stated and that still brings out a difference of only \$9,000 at the end of the day.

Mr. Tellier replied correct.

Alderman O'Neil asked can as proposed by you with an Assessor Chairman, Assessor, Assessor, Residential Appraiser and a Data Collector do the same work that the Mayor has proposed of a Director, three Appraisers and an Appraiser Technician.

Mr. Tellier answered yes.

Alderman O'Neil stated I guess the difference would be and I think Alderman DeVries started to touch on this a little bit, going forward when there are some retirements people could be brought in at a lower grade under the Mayor's proposal. Is that your understanding?

Mr. Tellier replied no. You know I really didn't understand what his proposal was on the retirement issue so I am not clear on that.

Chairman Gatsas stated based on your number, you have an Assessor that is starting at \$62,800 and that is under the Assessor that is just above him at \$75,000 so if either yourself or Mr. Nichols retires then...let's assume tomorrow Tom decided to retire. You would have two Assessors coming in at the \$62,000 level and that is where the Alderman was coming from.

Mr. Tellier replied I am sorry. If I was confused I apologize. That is correct, Alderman.

Alderman Osborne stated I think the question we have before us tonight is whether we want a full-time or a part-time Board of Assessors. I think that is what we should define right now and get into the other particulars later. I think we all know which way we are going.

Alderman Shea stated I believe I started the discussion exactly that way. I think I made reference to the fact that we probably can't make a determination this evening in terms of what is the most financially beneficial way of approaching the situations that we are going to be confronted with within the next couple of years. In other words we could talk from now until 7 PM when the other meeting is convened and it could be pointed out that we could be penny wise and pound foolish by trying to have fewer people when if we hired a few more people and we had continuous service being done, that is to say looking into new construction and whether permits have been followed and getting up-to-date data we wouldn't really have to pay outside consultants to come in and set-up different types of situations. So, the point is as Alderman Osborne just mentioned tonight we should decide should we go with a Board of Assessors or an outside Board to discuss assessor business. I guess that is it in a nutshell.

Alderman DeVries stated I would like some clarification. This is the same question Alderman O'Neil asked earlier of the City Solicitor. Just so I have it straight in my mind we currently cannot call an individual an Appraiser/Assessor, correct?

Deputy Solicitor Arnold replied I wouldn't say that you can't do that. What I would point out is that an assessor has certain statutory powers and duties so you ought to be careful not to confuse the powers of an assessor with the duties of an appraiser.

Alderman DeVries asked, Ginny, if we continue with a full-time Board calling them Assessors/Appraisers in your opinion are we locked into the same salary range that we are currently paying starting at \$62,000 or do you think there is the ability to call the Assessor/Appraiser that is doing residential and pay him less money than the assessor who is doing commercial.

Ms. Lamberton answered I personally have not analyzed those jobs but it was my understanding before my arrival that when they were doing the Yarger Decker study in fact that was the recommendation. That there be the Chair at a grade...I think there were two or three grades. I think a Grade 24 was the residential assessor, a Grade 25 was the commercial assessor and a Grade 26 was the Chair. Somehow, that disappeared and I don't know how that happened.

Alderman DeVries asked can you clarify that for me. Grade 24 is a salary range starting at what?

Mr. Nichols stated the last time that was voted on it was voted down because the Board of Assessors have the same authority, whether it is Steve as commercial or me as residential. We still have the same authority to grant abatements or deny abatements or give elderly or disability exemptions. We have the same authority.

Alderman DeVries replied I guess what I am suggesting is if we broke out the appraiser portion of the job separately and had an individual doing strictly residential appraisals it might carry a lesser value and thus allow us to get some cost savings while keeping the three positions. So the Grade 24 starts at what?

Ms. Lamberton answered about \$54,000...I have the FY02 salary. I don't have the 1% added on here but without the 1% it is \$54,336 and it maxes out at \$77,470. The Grade 25 starts at \$58,140 and maxes out at \$82,893.

Alderman DeVries stated so what we are saying then if we vote on a full-time Board is we are limiting our cost savings ability based on the last Yarger Decker profiling of job descriptions. The ability would be to drop that \$62,000 vacancy down to \$54,000 for an additional \$8,000 savings. Just so everybody is clear what they are voting on if we keep it at a full-time Board that is probably not unreasonable but...just so they know we are limiting the ability for cost savings versus the \$40,000 to \$45,000 that we were looking at for appraisers.

Chairman Gatsas stated but that is not really a true statement because you are assuming...your assumption is that you can hire a residential appraiser for \$41,000 and you can hire a commercial appraiser for \$45,000. If you can't do those two things then the cost savings approach is gone. We need to look at those realistically and I don't think that today you are going to find a commercial appraiser to walk in these doors for \$44,000 to do appraisals. It is not going to happen. If that is not a true number then the cost savings is gone. Let's not analyze and say these are true because I could come back and say let's start somebody off at \$32,000 and we can generate an \$18,000 savings. That is not a true picture.

Alderman Lopez stated I would to clarify what Alderman DeVries was talking about. This has been through our Committee. The Board of Assessors are a Grade 26 and we have tried to go to a Grade 24 and a Grade 25 and a Grade 26 and that was shot down. The Board of Assessors have a lot of authority. They are also appraisers. They do the job as appraisers and a Board of Assessors and they all indicated that they were all equal. If they are equal at a Grade 26 as a Board of Assessors, that means they are equal in commercial and residential. Keep that in mind because that is the argument that we got at our Committee a couple of years ago.

Mr. Tellier replied as a follow-up to that point of clarification, it is correct what Alderman Lopez mentioned as well as including in the job description either

certification as a certified NH Assessor, which includes all of those experiences and certifications that are required for the job or a certified General Appraiser under the Institute of Appraisers. So it included national and state designations for that position classification.

Alderman Thibault stated this morning when I was in your office Steve you brought up something about if, in fact, we were going to go with a full Board no matter what happens this year it could not change. Next year you cannot do that. It would have to be the following year.

Mr. Tellier asked are you talking about revaluation.

Alderman Thibault answered yes. So you couldn't do it this year no matter what happens here.

Mr. Tellier responded what I mentioned to you is you asked whether we could do it with 11 people if we started right off and I mentioned at this point we would still need some outside help because we are starting...the revaluation firm took almost two years to do the job.

Alderman Thibault asked could you break that down a little bit as far as that \$700,000 cost and what it may cost if, in fact, the Board asked you to do this.

Mr. Tellier answered we are actively pursuing breaking down that amount into the residential portion and the non-residential portion and in the residential portion further breaking that down into tasks that we could do in-house and what we made need professional assistance on. We are actively doing that.

Alderman Thibault stated then I would have to agree with Alderman Osborne and Alderman Shea that in fact tonight what we should be deciding here or what this Committee should be deciding is do we go with a full Board of Assessors or don't we.

Alderman O'Neil stated I have a couple of questions. Steve you were talking that your budget number is around \$700,000 or \$800,000 currently.

Mr. Tellier replied those were the two requests for proposals that I received from the only two companies that have the resources.

Alderman O'Neil asked if we commit to two more positions to bring your staffing level up to eleven...let's say we adopt, I think the discussion is just how this nine works out. There seems to be a consensus on it. Let's say for ballpark the salaries are about \$100,000 combined. Maybe it is a little bit less than that but will that \$100,000 investment save us more than \$100,000?

Mr. Tellier replied I believe so. I can look to our colleagues in Concord. They picked up an appraiser and his sole job was to visit properties along with some of the other appraisal staff. They increased their tax base by 1% when they added people to go out into the field and review properties on a daily basis.

Alderman O'Neil asked we are talking appraisers and not necessarily data collectors or is one...

Mr. Tellier interjected a data collector could suffice in some of that fieldwork.

Alderman O'Neil asked so the 10th position could be a data collector and the 11th could be an appraiser.

Mr. Tellier answered that is correct.

Alderman O'Neil asked, Tom, I just want to make sure I am clear on this. An assessor can be an appraiser but an appraiser cannot be an assessor under law?

Deputy Solicitor Arnold answered an appraiser can be an assessor and an assessor can be an appraiser. What I am saying is again under the law an assessor has certain statutory powers and duties that an appraiser who is not an assessor may not have. You can have an assessor that is an appraiser, yes.

Alderman O'Neil asked can you have an appraiser that is an assessor.

Mr. Tellier answered yes but only three by law.

Chairman Gatsas stated he could have his assessor's designation but only be hired as an appraiser. In other words you could hire an assessor tomorrow to be a commercial appraiser but he would not be an assessor under our standards. He could go to Littleton, NH and be hired as the assessor but with us he would be hired as an appraiser with the designation of an appraiser. You could have a commercial appraiser come in and do residential appraisals and have the designation of a commercial appraiser. Could you do them? Yes you could. Could they hire somebody for the 10th and 11th positions next year that could be assessors but doing commercial appraisals? Yes, but they would not be assessors or graded as assessors they would be graded as commercial appraisers.

Alderman O'Neil replied I am a little confused then. Could we have three people that are paid whatever the grade of an appraiser is be the Assessors for the City?

Deputy Solicitor Arnold responded yes.

Chairman Gatsas asked what you are asking is can we go back and change the grade level of the Assessors. Yes we could. That is basically the question you are asking. Could we go in and say that the Assessor is a Grade 22...

Alderman O'Neil interjected we have two Assessors right now. If we brought in a third person and they were paid at the appraiser grade could that person be classified as the third Assessor? That is my question.

Deputy Solicitor Arnold replied yes.

Chairman Gatsas stated sure you could. You could bring somebody in at a lower grade and still call them the Assessor. You could do that with any of these positions. There is no question you could do that. Are you going to find somebody that is going to come in for \$42,000 a year and say that he is an Assessor? I don't think so. I think that person would probably go to a different community and say I want \$65,000 and be an Assessor.

Alderman O'Neil asked if you run these numbers out for the full year it only looks like there is a difference of about \$19,000.

Chairman Gatsas answered I agree with you, Alderman, and that again is if you can hire an appraiser to do commercial real estate at \$45,000 and the residential at \$41,000. If you can't do that, that savings is diminished.

Alderman O'Neil stated so it is almost like we are there between the Assessor's recommendation and the Mayor's recommendation. It is just how things are titled if we take out the issue of the full-time Board versus part-time Board just for the discussion right now.

Chairman Gatsas stated the Mayor is looking for more public input so that we, as a full Aldermanic Board, are aware of what abatements are being made.

Alderman O'Neil replied but that can be done under either structure. There has been discussion about having minutes of the meetings and all of that. That can be done whether there is a full-time Board or a part-time Board. Again, we seem to be sitting here debating this issue and if we take away the debate of full and part-time over a savings of possibly \$20,000 it appears. Your thought that we might not be able to hire people in the appraiser grades of \$41,000 or \$45,000...that savings goes down even less than that. I think we are there.

Alderman Pinard moved to keep the full Board of Assessors.

Chairman Gatsas stated so that means that you would go with the Assessor's proposal 2 for nine positions and your recommendation is that those positions would be hired immediately.

Alderman Pinard replied I think that Steve should talk to the HR Director to see how the funding is right now.

Chairman Gatsas stated I think it is within his budget. I think he has already presented that.

Alderman Pinard replied if he has the money he can go for the full 11.

Alderman Guinta duly seconded the motion.

Alderman O'Neil asked are we going with the recommendations from the Assessors then to preserve a three member full-time Board, at some point get to a staffing level of 11, policies and procedures with regards to meeting process and abatements and develop additional controls...the four bullet points that are on the sheet. Is that what we are recommending as part of this motion?

Chairman Gatsas answered yes.

Mr. Tellier stated I don't want to shoot myself in the foot but I also don't want these two Committees to act on an assumption. The fact is that the remaining balance of Assessor Porter's salary and the Customer Service Rep position was withdrawn and placed in that \$650,000 pool of vacant positions. If you look on the last page of my proposal and the Mayor's proposal you will see at the bottom of that budgeted figure a contingency amount. Those monies would have to be found. It would be unprofessional of me to allow you to think that the monies are there. They may be available but that would be for the Mayor and this Board to determine but we do not have the money in our budget currently. It would be unprofessional of me not to bring that to your attention.

Alderman O'Neil replied we appreciate your honesty, Mr. Tellier.

Chairman Gatsas stated but the question is is there money in there to fund the Mayor's positions that he put in his proposal.

Mr. Tellier answered no.

Chairman Gatsas stated so we are looking at two proposals that are unfunded.

Mr. Tellier replied that is correct.

Chairman Gatsas stated so we are going to have five people working in the Assessor's...we have just wasted an hour.

Alderman Lopez asked can I address that. I think for the last two weeks that the Chairman and myself and Chairman being Dan O'Neil and the HR Director and the Mayor have worked very hard to find some unfilled positions and there is approximately \$300,000 that is available if this Board takes action. Until we take that action, the potential to have \$300,000 available this year to solve some of the problems that we do have in the Assessor's Office will be there providing the Board takes the action. We have been working for the last two weeks to find that money. I just want to also mention this. Are you speaking of nine positions or are you speaking of going back to the original three member Board of Assessors because that is only seven positions.

Chairman Gatsas replied we are talking about nine positions, Proposal 2 from the Assessors.

Alderman Lopez asked that is what you are talking about, nine positions.

Chairman Gatsas answered that is what I think all of us have been talking about.

Alderman Lopez stated okay so you are talking about going to nine positions you are talking about his proposal not the original structure of the Assessor's Department.

Alderman O'Neil stated I believe under both proposals we are talking about adding two positions. One is a residential appraiser and in the case of the Mayor he calls one an appraiser technician and the Assessor calls it a data collector. It is the same price. I have been sitting here thinking we are adding two positions, whichever plan we adopt.

Chairman Gatsas replied no we are not. We are just filling...the proposed Assessor's structure as you will see there are three vacant positions they have not filled. One being an Assessor's position for Paul Porter, the other is a Customer Service Rep and the other is a Data Collector.

Alderman Lopez stated that is not true.

Chairman Gatsas asked well what is true.

Ms. Lamberton answered you currently have seven positions in the Assessor's Office. Currently an Assessor is vacant and a Customer Service Rep is vacant. If you are talking about going to the proposal for nine positions it is just a matter of what you call them. I called one an appraiser technician just because I thought that is what you do in my world but on a daily basis Steve would call the person a data collector. It is the same function; it is just two different titles.

Alderman O'Neil asked but that is a new position, correct.

Ms. Lamberton answered that would be a new classification and then a new position.

Chairman Gatsas stated and the Mayor has that also.

Ms. Lamberton replied they are identical things.

Alderman O'Neil asked and there is a new position of a residential appraiser in both plans.

Ms. Lamberton answered correct.

Alderman O'Neil stated so we are talking about two new positions.

Ms. Lamberton replied two new positions, that is correct. Then if you look at the last page of both proposals you will see at the bottom it clearly states on both Steve's and the Mayor's that there is a contingency requirement if you do anything. Part of the discussions that I was involved in, I believe Kevin Clougherty and Randy said there were still funds in the contingency fund from last year of I think \$175,000 or something so that the full Board could transfer those monies into the Assessor's Office to fund the additional staffing.

Chairman Gatsas asked and the difference if \$4,000.

Ms. Lamberton answered no. Look at the bottom of the page. Contingency requirement. Look at the last page.

Chairman Gatsas stated it is \$102,912 on the Mayor's...

Ms. Lamberton interjected no. The very last page of the handout.

Chairman Gatsas asked what handout.

Ms. Lamberton answered the one that is attached to the agenda.

Alderman O'Neil asked what is the number.

Ms. Lamberton stated it says budget eight staff as reorganized under the Mayor's proposal it would require \$89,603. With nine staff it would require \$112,619. Under Steve's proposal it would require \$75,569 for eight and for nine employees it would be \$98,585.

Alderman O'Neil stated the one I have for the Mayor says \$102,000. It says for eight positions it is \$79,896...

Ms. Lamberton interjected if you go to the very last page you can see what I am talking about.

Alderman Osborne asked can't we just take a vote on this whether we want to go part-time or full-time and take up the positions and the funding at a later date.

Chairman Gatsas answered no. I think it is paramount because this Committee needs to come forward and talk tonight about filling positions because they are working with five people. We are talking about nine and they only have five.

Alderman Osborne asked do you want to fill these positions right away. Is that what it is?

Mr. Tellier answered we could use the help right away, Alderman. That is a fact.

Alderman O'Neil asked wasn't there a sign-off on the Customer Service Rep.

Mr. Tellier answered yes and I will be interviewing this week.

Alderman O'Neil asked so you are only down one then.

Mr. Tellier answered two positions if you go to the nine.

Alderman O'Neil replied forget the nine. Your seven that you have you are only down one, the Assessor position.

Mr. Tellier responded correct.

Chairman Gatsas called for a vote on the motion to adopt the Board of Assessor's recommendations and Proposal 2, which calls for nine employees. The motion carried with Alderman Lopez duly recorded in opposition.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated I just want to clarify for the Clerk's Office that our understanding is the bullet points, which show 11 FTE's is what the vote was based on. It is based on the Board of Assessor's recommendations on the front page of their handout.

Chairman Gatsas replied it is based on nine employees.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated it says total staffing of 11 FTE's or a combination of outsourcing and staffing as determined by the BMA. That is what it states on the sheet.

Chairman Gatsas asked what sheet are you looking at.

Deputy Clerk Johnson answered the one right in your hand on the bottom.

Chairman Gatsas stated I think what we are looking at right now...I think this is based on revaluation. We haven't got into that.

Deputy Clerk Johnson asked so which proposal...the statement in the motion was the recommendations as outlined with all of those establishing the policies, etc.

Chairman Gatsas replied how about we just take that one line out of that page – the total staffing of 11 FTE's.

Deputy Clerk Johnson asked are you substituting 9 for the 11.

Chairman Gatsas answered no I am taking that whole line right out.

Deputy Clerk Johnson asked so you are not acting on the staffing levels at all.

Chairman Gatsas answered staffing levels will be as proposed in Proposal 2 by the Assessors, which is nine positions.

Deputy Clerk Johnson asked is that what Alderman Pinard is moving on and Alderman Guinta seconded and there is no objection from anybody who has voted as to the understanding of what was voted upon.

There were no objections.

Alderman Lopez asked the vote included three full-time Assessors right.

Deputy Clerk Johnson answered yes it did.

There being no further business, on motion of Alderman Pinard, duly seconded by Alderman Sysyn, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee